

The Abolitionists: Sojourner Truth

By Biography.com Editors and A+E Networks, adapted by Newsela staff on 08.05.16

Word Count **414**



Synopsis: Sojourner Truth was an African-American leader. She fought against slavery. Slavery is an awful part of American history. Millions of African-Americans were owned by other people. They were forced to work for white Americans. Truth was born a slave around 1797 and escaped to freedom in 1826. She fought for equal rights for African-Americans and women.

A Life Of Slavery

Sojourner Truth was born with the name Isabella Baumfree around 1797. Her mother and father were both slaves. The Baumfrees were owned by a white family in New York.

The Baumfree family was separated in 1806. When she was 9 years old, Truth was sold with some sheep for \$100. She was sold twice more over the next two years. She finally came to live on the property of John Dumont in New York. There, Truth fell in love with a

slave named Robert. He lived on a nearby farm. The two had a daughter named Diana. Robert's owner did not allow him to be with Truth. In 1817, Dumont forced Truth to marry an older slave named Thomas. They had two sons and two daughters together.

Early Years Of Freedom

In late 1826, Truth escaped. She was free. The next year, New York freed all the slaves in the state.

In 1843, she started going by the name Sojourner Truth. She dedicated her life to Christianity and fighting slavery. In 1844, she joined an antislavery group. The group also supported women's rights.

In 1850, Truth published a book about her life. It was called *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave*. Truth started traveling the country giving talks. She spoke about slavery and equal rights.

In 1851, Truth spoke at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention. Her famous speech was called "Ain't I a Woman?" It was printed in many newspapers.

Advocacy During The Civil War

During the Civil War, Truth met with then-President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. She told him about her ideas and her life.

Lincoln freed all the country's slaves in 1863. Truth kept fighting for their rights. She tried to help freed slaves get land from the government. She said that owning land would help African-Americans be successful.

Death And Legacy

As she grew older, Truth continued to give speeches. She talked about equal rights and fairness. She died at her home in Michigan in 1883.

Truth is remembered as one of the leaders of efforts against slavery and an early supporter of women's rights.